

# Vandalism Threatens Prehistoric Ruins in America

By HENRY G. TINSLEY

WILL not something be done to stop the wholesale vandalism going on among the priceless relics of prehistoric races in the Southwest? American capital and American scientific thought are given to exploring the ruins of ancient Mesopotamian and Nile country cities, and to uncovering architecture of peoples of long ago along the northern coast of Africa, while very few Americans know that superb antiquities of a marvelous and unknown race exist in abundance among the lonely mountains and canyons of our own Southwest. Not only this, but Americans are so careless of these remains of an unknown pre-Columbian people, that practically no attempt is made toward their preservation and every year reckless mercenary vandals destroy, for scientific research, the remains consisting of magnificent fortresses of stone built 3,000 and 4,000 years ago on the cliffs of northern Arizona and southwestern Colorado by probably the earliest race to tread the soil of America.

Nothing in Europe or Asia Minor is so interesting and valuable to archaeologists as these remains of a powerful race of which there is little known, and which vanished long before Columbus sailed into the West. No European country would be so heedless of her archaeological treasures. Even Egypt, debt-ridden and decrepit, guards her buried cities and prehistoric remains jealously, while Italy has an army to protect her Roman relics and punish even tiny thefts at her Pompeii—a mere chronological youth if compared with the age of the aboriginal relics in our Southwestern territories. There are, throughout the Southwest, an aggregation of primitive prehistoric relics as profoundly interesting as any in the Old World. And scarcely one American in twenty knows anything about them.

A hundred years ago we might have pointed with warrantable pride to a marvelous collection of mounds and earthworks, to our vast buried cities, our pictured and inscribed rocks, our ruins and our sky-hung cliff dwellings—all telling a deeply fascinating tale of a race of people who long ago struggled for existence and happiness as keenly, if not as feverishly, as we do today. But, alas! this generation regretfully recognizes that our Middle West mounds and earthworks are but a miserable remnant, a mere handful, of the once thousands of varying examples of the constructive skill of the race which so picturesquely decorated nearly half the area of this broad land.

The engineering feats of American aborigines, which are so fast disappearing, were apparently the outgrowth of two motives. One seemed to be purely ceremonial and quite in accord with certain religious dictates, which demanded the erection of vast flat topped pyramids and mounds, or marvelous earth bas-reliefs in the shape of animals, birds and serpents; the other the outcome of the sad need of all human creatures for a last resting place, made manifest by a preference for tenderly laying away their dead in huge earthen sarcophagi, raised far above the surrounding plain. They also deposited with their dead the accoutrements and domestic paraphernalia used by the individual in life.

While numbers of fine collections have been excavated and brought together, through the instrumentality of scientific students of archaeology, it is a sad fact that by far the greater portion have been wantonly sacrificed by untrained persons, who, with unrestrained enthusiasm or with mercenary motives, have unearthed splendid collections and passed over many of the closely connected and vital problems, as those of construction, distribution and association. Only in rare instances has there been displayed an appreciation by a few public spirited men of the crying need of careful, scientific investigation and the rescue of type examples of these prehistoric works for perpetuation from the ravages of collectors.

The prehistoric mounds and caves have been destroyed and what remain should be preserved by legislation; but the destruction of magnificent memorials of very ancient ruins—historic legacies, as they are—in the Southwest may be checked ere it is too late.

In that vast arid region designated as the Great American Desert, covering, as it does, almost the entire limits of Arizona and New Mexico and smaller portions of Nevada, Utah and Colorado, are to be found thousands of examples of handiwork of primitive communal peoples.

Cliff houses are found there, cave lodges, ruins on the narrow tillable levels of deep and dark canyons, extensive buried cities, sometimes entirely covered and again only partially hidden by the drifting alkali sands which mercilessly hurl over the lonesome wastes. There are several examples, too, of stupendous and massive temples, which have proudly held their own in desolation and solitude for centuries, every type of work telling a sad and pathetic tale of a race which, in the struggle for existence, was combating the most sinister and arid environment of the world.

All these invaluable possessions are fast disappearing, simply for lack of proper legislation to protect them. Dr. J. Walker Fewkes, of the Smithsonian Institution, one of the best authorities on Southwestern archaeology, has deep-rooted convictions on the subject and the need for immediate and prompt action, and has interestingly related the present status of the situation.

For a dozen years the Southwest has become a touring point annually for thousands of visitors, attracted thither by the marvelous and eccentric forms of nature, the climate, the impressive structures of the Pueblos, the curious and still almost primitive life of their inhabitants, and, lastly, the remarkable cliff dwellings of the canyons and the massive temples of the plains. These visitors have created a tremendous

demand for the art products of the ancient freeholders.

In consequence a new industry has sprung up, and every town vaunts its curio and bric-a-brac shop, where a conglomeration of minerals, rare and otherwise, modern Indian paraphernalia made to order, brand new basketry and pottery, and often scores and scores of fine examples of art from the site of ancient buried cities or from the former nest-like homes of the cliff peoples, are to be found. Even the solitary trader at the water tank has become afflicted with the bric-a-brac epidemic and peddles his prehistoric wares through the halted train, to the edification of the passengers and usually to the proprietor's financial satisfaction.

The discovery of the commercial value of such specimens has given rise to keen competition among the traders over this entire region, and the fact that several large collections have sold for fancy sums has so stimulated their cupidity that mercenary collectors have entirely outstripped scientific men in the search for and the acquisition of these articles, and have committed most pernicious acts of vandalism.

The finest and oldest of all ruins in the Union—if not in all the world—has been shamefully mutilated during the past year. We refer to Montezuma's Castle—a majestic, communal habitation that stands 200 feet up the precipitous cliffs of Beaver Creek (a branch of the Verde River) in Yavapai County, in northern Arizona. Prof. Samuel Wren, of Cambridge University, England, twenty years ago pronounced it the most marvelous prehistoric dwelling in the civilized world—worth going even farther to see than the ruins in Rhenish Bavaria. Montezuma's Castle never had anything to do with the great Aztec Montezuma, but it has undoubtedly stood perched upon its limestone cliff three or four thousand years. Ages ago a multitude of human martins carried up the cliffs on their backs, every stone, every bit of mortar used in the ponderous edifice, and the engineering and architectural skill these laborers displayed stamps these extraordinary people and their work as mysterious and imposing as anything in Egypt and Asia.

Montezuma's Castle comprises five stories of hewn stone, cemented together in walls four feet thick. In height, the castle is fifty-two feet. It is crescent shaped and is seventy-five feet long. It contains thirty-one rooms. Everywhere within are indications of the mode of living of the unknown race, who dwelt there before Rome ruled the world. Such an impressive ruin would be guarded with jealous care were it in European countries, and thousands of Americans would cross land and sea to view it. But this nation has allowed it to be whacked to pieces by relic hunters so that it is fast falling to destruction. Every year sees a falling of some of its walls, in the efforts of mercenary explorers to exhume mummies, and to get articles of dress, jewelry, and burial vases of prehistoric days. One of the principal rooms in the great pile was completely ruined last year by blasting open supposed burial vaults, in the hope of getting relics for exhibition at the Pan-American Exposition, and during the past few months a great wall, which undisturbed would have endured a thousand years longer, fell with a crash in the canyon below because of under-mining by reckless curio seekers.

The abominable work of destroying the cliff dwellings in southern Utah is now well nigh complete. Dr. James B. Weller, of Chicago University, says that he was shocked, upon recently visiting Utah cliff dwellings, to observe the wholesale havoc that has been made there since he explored in that region eleven years ago. What used to be superb remains for scientific study, and what he believed to be the most fruitful field for ascertaining many facts concerning the life, habits, degree of civilization and aspirations of a race, who dwelt there fully 4,000 years ago, are now irreparably destroyed for satisfactory investigation. From the Utah cliff dwellings, seven tons of most valuable relics were taken away for exhibition purposes at the World's Fair, and were afterward auctioned off for curios in a Chicago shop. Tombs of aboriginal kings and queens were blown open, and dynamite hurled asunder council chambers and tribal castles that had been built with infinite patience and surpassing skill on the ledges of towering cliffs. Such wanton destruction of priceless relics would be viewed with horror in any European country.

The Petrified Forest—the largest and most marvelous of its kind in all the world—in northeastern Arizona has been woefully hacked to pieces and carted away wholesale, by vandal hands. In the fall of 1899, this wonderland was put under a quasi protection of the Land Office of the Interior Department but it has not availed much, and it was far too late to save the noblest specimens of the giant trees which grew eons and eons ago. Tons of petrified wood are still carted away from the government lands every month and during the past summer, five of the finest specimens of standing trees have disappeared by piecemeal in one and two foot sections. But this is nothing to the manner of the destruction of the forest from the time the Santa Fe railroad built through the region of the Petrified Forest, in 1885, until two years ago. A company of Colorado

men engaged in the work of gathering carload lots of sections of the fossilized trees and in polishing slabs sawed from them. The petrifications are as hard as flint, and as beautifully colored as agate or onyx, and there are mantels, hotel bars, parlor tables, and even wainscoting in the Middle West made from the priceless relics of unfathomable ages in the Petrified Forest.

Most wanton despoliation of the remains of the great unknown races which occupied the sandy plains of southern and central Arizona, long before the birth of Christ, still goes on in the Salt River Valley—in the vicinity of Phoenix and Mesa City. Tens of thousands of people dwelt in cities where there are now lonely wastes and cattle ranges. No one knows how long ago they built the now ruined temples of adobe clay, the enormous city walls and the strangely constructed irrigation canals which run hither and yon among the foothills and across the plains. There is scarcely a bit of evidence, as to who these industrious, provident and skillful aborigines were, where they came from or how or when they disappeared from the face of the globe. There are few more baffling facts in archaeology and ethnology than those concerning the wonderful race that dwelt in southern and central Arizona.

These people left crude implements of stone and bone, jewelry of shells, cooking utensils of stone, and remains everywhere of habitations. The nation has done absolutely nothing to protect these relics, which would be beyond value in any European country. Hundreds of men and boys dig and plow at will among the mighty pre-Columbian cities, tear down walls, exhume implements, open graves and carry away wagon loads of relics for selling the same to dealers in curios and Indian artifacts. The curio stores in all California and Southwestern towns, where tourists come, contain quantities of relics of the unknown ancient people, who were highly civilized for their age. These relics left undisturbed and together, and studied by competent scientists, would solve one of the most mystifying and interesting problems American archaeologists and ethnologists may have to grapple. During the past year seven men have been at work in digging literally a carload of priceless relics, and at the same time destroying prehistoric boundary lines at Los Muertos, in Maricopa County, while the national authorities have looked idly on.

Dr. Fewkes and Prof. Hodge, of the Smithsonian Institution, are of the opinion that unless some check is made upon the vandalism of our prehistoric remains in the Southwest, there will be none worth protecting in a few years more. But there is a question as to what is the most expedient method of bringing about a cessation of the rapid destruction of these memorials. Two suggestions may be offered. One is that public benefactors, through proper scientific societies, with adequate endowments, take the matter in hand; the other course should be to protect, by popular interests, a few well chosen types representing the various phases of aboriginal engineering and architectural skill.

The United States is the only civilized country in the world that has not stringent laws in regard to the exportation of antiquities. One or two of the best collections from the ruins of ancient mound builders have been sold to foreign museums, so that it is now necessary for a student who wishes to examine antiquities of his own country to go to Europe. Mexico has for years set us a shining example, which we have disregarded, in her laws which not only regulate the exportation of archaeological material, but prevent the wholesale destruction of antiquities by commercially imbued spirits.

To-day there is nothing to prevent any one in this country from tearing down a ruin, gathering together the ancient objects which are found therein, and selling them to the highest bidder.

## The Only Man Who Was Ever Senator from Three States

ONLY one man thus far has been sufficiently versatile to be elected to the United States Senate from three different states.

The man who made this unique political record was James Shields, who was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, in 1810. He was Senator from Illinois, Minnesota and Missouri.

Emigrating to this country at an early age, he took up the study of law and located at Kaskaskia, Illinois. No sooner had he become a full-fledged citizen of that state than he proceeded to help himself to every office that was not nailed down. He was successively a member of the legislature, state auditor, supreme court judge, general land office commissioner, and a soldier in the Mexican war, being breveted a Major General. He wound up his career in Illinois with the Senatorship.

Taking a liking to Minnesota, he moved up there and made himself so popular that he was soon handed the senatorship from that state.

He was next lured to California, but the breaking out of the war between the states prevented him from acquiring anything politically. He enlisted in the Union army from that state, and at the close of hostilities located in Missouri. His first office there was Adjutant General. At the first opportunity he took over the Senatorship.

Had he not been born in a foreign country it is quite probable that this genial man would have gone after the presidency of the United States.

He died at Ottumwa, Iowa, in 1879.